DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 220 077 IR 010 290

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TITLE Centralized Services for Libraries. The African Experience. Occasional Paper No. 8.
INSTITUTION Tanzania Library Service, Dar es Salaam.
PUB DATE Sep 79
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented to the Afro-Nordic Library Conference (3rd, Espoo, Finland, September 3-7, 1979). For related documents, see IR 010 288, IR 010 291-294, IR 010 297-299, IR 010 306 and IR 010 308. Best copy available.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Archives; Depository Libraries; *Developing Nations; Foreign Countries; Interlibrary Loans; Library Associations; *Library Cooperation; *Library Education; *Library Materials; Library Networks; Library Personnel; *Library Services; Library Technical Processes; Training; Union Catalogs
IDENTIFIERS *Africa (East); Kenya; Tanzania; Uganda

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the development of library cooperation and the centralization of library services in East Africa (i.e., Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda). Included are descriptions of interlibrary lending arrangements, the role of library associations, the education of professional librarians and the training of library paraprofessionals, specialized library networks, legal depository libraries in East Africa, cooperative bibliographic services (including the development of union lists and union catalogs), and library services and technical processes (including cataloging and classification, acquisitions, data processing, and the manufacture of library equipment). An 8-item list accompanies the text. (JL)

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(Occasional Papers)

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NO.8

CENTRALIZED SERVICES FOR LIBRARIES
The African Experience.*

by
E.E. Kaungamno

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*Paper delivered to the Third Afro - Nordic Library Conference, Espoo, Finland 3 - 7 September, 1979.

IR010 290

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CENTRALIZED SERVICES FOR LIBRARIES

- The African experience -

by

Ezekiel E. Kaungamno, Director
Library Services, Tanzania

My talk will cover mainly East Africa which consists of Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. For centralized services for libraries to operate effectively a high level of cooperation among the countries concerned is required. In East Africa the matter of cooperation has been discussed many times. It was during 1968 (in Tanzania) and 1970 (in Uganda), at the East African librarians' conference when the issue of cooperation (including centralized services for libraries) was discussed at great length.

Interlending of library materials

There is a great need for libraries to cooperate in order to maximize the useof their collections.As Mr. E.M. Broome, has put it: "while it may have been possible before 1900 to contemplate a single library able to house a complete collection of all relevant printed material, this is already impossible now that the volume of printed matter has reached such dimensions. No library can stand alone and this is even more true in a developing country with limited book resources. The material in all libraries in the nation must be linked together and made available in any one of them as the need arises"[1]

Inter-library lending can be made possible through a centrally maintained union catalogue which will facilitate location of materials. However, Tucker Lwanga, Makerere University Librarian, outlines ways and means of creating the Union catalogue and the resultant problems, "Even with such a gigantic record of holdings," he points out, there would still be no guarantee that a particular book or journal that I might want is going to be found. The reason being that no mechanism exists for anticipating my needs and for making certain that some library somewhere will satisfy my needs.

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Locating devices are certainly important in mobilising the resources of a great many large and diversified libraries, but they still lead only to books which exist in those libraries as a result of the independent and uncoordinated acquisitions policies of each of them ... We should, therefore, bear in mind that in planning the establishment of formal interlending library cooperation, equal emphasis must be placed on both interlending and cooperative acquisition schemes."[2]

Library cooperation in East Africa includes not only interlending of library materials, photocopying services, and publications exchange arrangements but also union lists and other bibliographic activities. There are no formal agreements governing interlending. Cooperation is, however, impaired by the absence of an inventory of resources which can facilitate location of specific titles as and when they are needed.

The issue of whether or not cooperation should be voluntary (informal) or involuntary (formal) is a thorny one. If I may again refer to Tucker Iwanga, it is his conviction that interlibrary cooperation in each country should be backed by legislation otherwise it will not work efficiently. However, he says that the legislation should be based on the principle of co-ordination rather than control. He does not support the idea, which has been circulating among librarians in East Africa, that a national library or any other type of library can control the work of all other libraries in the country. I agree with Mr. Tucker Iwanga that cooperation in each country should be backed by legislation. However rather than the law being based on coordination it should be based on control. My experience is that unless there is a firm control the system does not work properly. After all if library cooperation is for the benefit of all why base it on the will to cooperate which is subject to individual whims or personalities who may or may not want to cooperate? Of course inter-library cooperation at regional level can only be coordinated because each nation is sovereign.

I will now give a few examples of centralized services at the regional (East African) level which used to operate or are still in operation.

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In 1956 the East African Library Association was formed with the following main objectives:

(a) To encourage the promotion, establishment and improvement of libraries and library services and

(b) To improve the standard of librarianship and status of the library profession.

The Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania library associations were affliated to the East African Library Association. However by 1971/1972 the national library associations broke away from the parent association mainly because the later appeared to be inactive and the national library associations felt they were not receiving the services expected from the parent association in return for their big yearly contributions. Since the breakaway of the national library association, the biennial conferences held under the auspices of the East African Library Association continued to be held under the umbrella of the Standing Conference of East African Librarians. The biennial conferences membership was later on widened to include librarians from Eastern, central and southern Africas; hence the new name Standing conference of East African Librarians. (SCECSAL).

In the 1960's the then East African Agricultural and Forestry Organization (EAAFR)[3] started operating a literature service for Uganda Tanzania and Kenya. The service has its origin in 1966 when the Rockefeller Foundation, on the request of the EAAFRO, agreed to support a pilot project designed to provide scientific literature to research workers. The East African Community obligation was to meet operational costs of the service Using a xerox copier, the EAAFRO, based at Muguga, Kenya, provided an excellent literature service to East African subscribers by regularly sending copies of the tables of contents of leading periodicals in the natural and physical sciences. The organization was, in this way, able to stimulate and facilitate requests for articles of interest to research workers. However the service ceased with the break of the East African Community in 1976. Proposals have been made in Tanzania to set up a similar service at the Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary Science (University of Dar es Salaam) Morogoro to serve the needs researchers in the country.

The training of librarians in East Africa is centralized. ?

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The Library Training Conference in Nairobi in 1963 recommended that an East African School of Librarianship be established under the auspices of the then University of East Africa. It was resolved that the proposed School should conduct two courses:

(a) A certificate course in library studies for library assistants;
(b) An undergraduate Diploma Course for professional librarians. In 1974 a proposal was made for the establishment of a Post-graduate diploma.

The governing body of the School is the Council for Library Training in East Africa whose members are:

(a) the Chief librarians, Universities of Nairobi, Makerere and Dar es Salaam.

(b) the Director of national library services in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

(c) one representative from library associations in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

(d) one representative from ministies of Education in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

The Director of the School is ex-officio and acts as secretary to the Council. It now appears that Kenya and Tanzania will establish their own Library Schools in the very near future.

From 1972 the training of para-professional was decentralized. The certificate course for library assistants was started in Tanzania in 1972 and in Kenya in 1973. As regards the Certificate course at Makerere, arrangements started in 1974 to find alternative facilities outside the main Universitycampus.

Training in documentation work has also been done regionally. As a matter of fact the whole of Eastern Africa is involved. In Eastern Africa, the German foundation for International Development (DSE) has perhaps been involved in documentation more than any other foreign organization. The documentation project covers 13 countries namely Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malagasy, Malawi, Mauritius, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. The 1973 International Conference on the Development of Documentation and Information Networks in East Africa is worth noting because in a way it established the frame-work for future development. Organized in Nairobi by the then East African Academy in Cooperation with the German Foundation for International Development and with assistance of Unesco, the conference discussed ways and means of stimulating a rapid development in documentation in the East African region.

The main recommendations adopted by the Conference were as follows:[4]

"Recognizing the importance of empirical information and data in the process of economic and social development in developing countries, the Conference recommends

(a) that governments of developing countries should urgently formulate national documentation policies and integrate them in the national development plans;

(b) that each national government should create or cause the creation of an information unit in each ministry, statutory body and other specialized institution, to collect, evaluate, process and disseminate information in collaboration with a central agency in the same country;

(c) that a national documentation centre be created in each country with the key functions of coordinating the work of all documentation centres providing information in specific subject areas and geographical regions, collecting data and information in those areas;

(d) that the government or government chartered body be created to guide, stimulate and coordinate all information services and to establish national information priorities.

The conference recommended the formation of a Regional Committee which would be responsible, inter alia, for:

(a) the coordination and planning of documentation activities in the region

(b) standardization in the field of documentation in the area of training and professional standards, manpower requirements, input and output formats, etc.

(c) elaboration of the system design for documentation services in the countries of the East African region.

(d) advising the national coordinating bodies on various aspects of documentation.

(e) acting, on the one hand, as the liaison agency between national coordinating bodies in the region, and on the other hand, between the region and international organizations.

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(f) equitable distribution of international aid for the development of information resources and services in the whole region.

One of the recent important meetings was that held in Nairobi from 2nd - 4th April 1979 under the auspices of the Regional Committee with its secretariat in Nairobi. The meeting discussed the vital issue concerning the draft project for a Regional Network of Scientific and Technical Information in Eastern Africa. The project is intended to implement in Eastern Africa the UNISIST programme by helping the development of national information infrastructure and strengthen as well as coordinate scientific and technical information in each country of the sub-region. Eventually it is intended to apply to UNDP for financial assistance for the project.

The application to UNDP for financial assistance for the project should have been submitted in 1975 but this was not possible because of failure to obtain endorsement from as many countries as possible due to the fact that most member states including Tanzania had not established National Focal Points and UNISIST National Committee in line with UNESCO's guidelines sent to member States in 1973. As a matter of fact, by January 1978 UNESCO's list indicated that only Ghana, Ivory Coast, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal and Tunisia had either established National Focal Points or UNISIST National Committees. Obviously it is only after establishing strong national information infrastructures at national level can coordinated information structures at regional level be developed.

At this juncture it is also necessary to outline the bibliographic services in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.

The Makerere University Library by virtue of the Makerere University College (deposit library) Act, 1978 became a legal depository of Uganda publications. The University library also performs the basic functions of a national library in Uganda. The University Library Bulletin and Accessions List has included a section entitled Uganda Bibliography since 1965. It also publishes a Union Catalogue of East Africa Holdings at the University of Nairobi, Dar es Salaam and Makerere. For several years Professor B.W. Langlands of the Department of Geography at Makerere University used to publish "Uganda Bibliography" in each issue of the Uganda Journal.

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However there is no comprehensive Union Catalogue for the country's holdings and as pointed out above Uganda does not publish a separate national bibliography.

Another legal depository institution is the Uganda Institute of Public Administration. Under the Deposit and Documentation Centre Act, 1968 which received the Presidential assent in 1969, the Institute is entitled to receive books and all publications published in Uganda.

In Kenya, there are three separate laws[5] governing the maintenance of public records, the enforcement of copyright and the implementation of legal deposit legislation. These include the Public Archives Act and the Copyright Act both enacted in 1966, and the Books and Newspaper Ordinance passed in 1960. The Public Archives Act stipulates inter alia that the Chief Archivist shall acquire, organize and preserve public records as well as control and make the documents available for use. The Kenya copyright Act (revised 1967) provides for registration of copyrights of literary, musical and artistic works including films, sound recordings and broadcasts. Under the Books and Newspaper Ordinance 1960 (revised 1962) printers of books and newspapers must deliver to the Registrar General in the Attorney General's Office three copies of all books and newspapers. The Attorney General's office in turn undertakes to distribute these publications to the National Archives, the University of Nairobi Library and the Kenya National Library Service. The University of Nairobi and the Kenya National Library Service can claim legal deposit rights. Government publications are, however, not covered by the legal deposit laws. All copies of Government publications produced by the Government Printer are sent to many institutions including Ministries, the University, the Kenya National Library Service, the National Archives, all foreign embassies and the Library of Congress Field Office in Nairobi.

Although the Nairobi University Library and the Kenya National Library Service are individually or cooperatively in a good position to compile a National Bibliography, they have not done so. The University of Nairobi compiles a Library Accessions List of Kenya publications acquired. Also with the help of a computer it compiles, Periodicals in East African Libraries: A Union List, formerly done by Dr. Robert F. Munn, Director of Libraries, West Virginia University, U.S.A. The Kenya National Library Service also compiles Accessions Lists.

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The Library of Congress Office in Nairobi has since 1968 been very active in collecting local publications in English and the vernacular including Swahili publications. Its Quarterly Accessions List: Eastern Africa itemizing annuals, monographs books and serials is a valuable source of information. Although the Library of Congress office in Nairobi has established an acquisition programme which also covers Ethiopia, Malawi, Mauritius, Somali Republic, Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia it appears to have a significant influence in the production of a separate Kenya National Bibliography by local organizations. As Sue Brothers put it: "the establishment of an indigenous capacity to perform the national bibliographic function would entail considerable expense and largely duplicate the work now being done by the Library of Congress at no cost to Kenya." It therefore "seems reasonable to continue to direct available resources to support other types of libraries which under present circumstances warrant higher priority."[5]

Let us now look at the bibliographic situation in Tanzania. The Tanzania Government passed the Libraries (Deposit of Books) Act in 1962. This Act required every printer of every book and other publications in Tanzania to deliver at his own expense one perfect copy of the book or publication to the Deposit section of the library of the University of Dar es Salaam within one month after the day on which each book is first delivered out of the press. Later on, under the Libraries (Deposit of Books) Order 1963 every printer was required to deliver an additional copy to the Director of Library Services at the National Central Library in Dar es Salaam. However, the Libraries (Deposit of Books) Order, 1963 was repealed by the new 1975 Tanzania Library Services Board Act. Under section 5(2) of the Act it is "the duty of every person who prints or produces or c uses to be printed or produced in Tanganyika any book or other literary work intended for sale or public distribution or exhibition ... has to supply the Board, free of charge, not less than two copies of such book or other literary work". Since 1969 Tanzania has compiled the National Bibliography of Tanzania which is based on the legal deposit materials at the National Central Library and the University of Dar es Salaam Library. The compilation of a retrospective bibliography covering the years 1964-68 inclusive has also been completed and is being published.

Tanzania Library Service has also compiled Periodicals in Tanzania Libraries. A Union List. This is a list of periodical holdings in libraries of ministries, parastatal organizations and other institutions. Except periodical holdings of the Library of the University of Dar es Salaam, these holdings were not listed in the Munn's publication.

Thus by using the Union Lists of periodicals produced by Tanzania Library Service and the Library of the University of Nairobi, it is possible to have a fairly comprehensive union list of periodicals in East Africa. Reference has already been made to the University of Dar es Salaam Library as a legal depository under the Libraries (Deposit of Books) Act 1962. In the absence of a Tanzania National Bibliography before 1969, its Quarterly Bulletin and Accessions List acted as a national bibliography and since 1966 it was supplemented by the "Tanzania Bibliography" published in Tanzania Notes and Records, a scholarly journal of authropological studies.

There are many problems which hinder an effective bibliographic work in East Africa. Some of these drawbacks already outlined by S.I.A. Kotei are[7]

(1) Scarcity of professional librarians, bibliographers and documentalists especially assigned to bibliographical work.

(2) The inadequate legal depository laws, also failure to enforce such laws.

(3) The embryonic state of publishing, printing and book distribution which tends to impede free flow and access to literature.

(4) Lack of a National Bibliographic Centre in each country.

As can be seen there is need to improve the bibliographic situation in East Africa. In this respect the important role played by foreign organizations is very much appreciated.

The Accession list: Eastern Africa of the Library of congress is a very valuable bibliographic tool. The Standing Conference on Library Materials in Africa (SCOLMA) through its Area Specialization Scheme has produced very useful bibluographics. The Sussex University, whose area of interest covers Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, has compiled valuable bibliographies. African Studies Associations and Institutions in United States of America, United Kingdon, Scandinavia and other countries have also played an active role in this area.

In a way, apart from the fact that foreign organizations have, comparatively speaking, the necessary finance and manpower to do bibliographic work, it is inevitable that African nations should rely on them. As Angela Molnos*[8] has rightly pointed out: "There is no doubt that the greatest and most complete collections of documents on Africa are still kept outside. This is the result of a long history of African studies carried out almost exclusively by non-African travellers, missionaries, civil servants and scholars. They spent varying long periods of their lives in Africa, went back to their respective countries where they wrote down their impressions.... Some or many of them (one does not know) also took home original documents, manuscripts and records they found in missions and offices along their African ways."

Up to now, it will be noticed that I have outlined the kind of services that can or could be done in East Africa nationally or regionally on a centralized or cooperative basis. My colleague Harold Gronhein has already told us about centralized services for libraries in Scandinavia. Such services unfortunately do not exist in our countries and if they do exist at all they are not as developed as those in Denmark, Norway, Sweden or Finland. We really envy them for such services. We have been told that Library Bureaus in Scandinavia generally offer the following services.

(1) Centralized cataloguing and classification;
(2) Publishing activities;
(3) Binding;
(4) Purchase and sale of books;
(5) Data processing and
(6) Manufacture of equipment, furniture and library materials;

Let us briefly look at the East African situation with regard to those services. Because these supporting services are not fully developed nationally or regionally we are facing many problems.

Cataloguing and Classification

Individual libraries do their own cataloguing and classification. "Centralized cataloguing", as Michal Wise* has pointed out, "is an obvious saving in skilled labour by performing from one centre the work that otherwise will be repeated, with variations, all over the area served". "And the variations in cataloguing", he continues, "may cause confusion sometimes when libraries communicate with each other".[9]

As far as classification is concerned, there are two or more classification systems used in any country.

Publishing

Most University libraries have "technical services" which can take care of publishing of some of the university publications but not all. Other types of libraries, normally, have to use outside 'commercial services' which besides being very expensive, are not efficient.

Binding

Here again university libraries are in most cases better off than other types of libraries in that they have their own binding units. Most public libraries and other types of libraries dont have bibding units and have to rely on commercial enterprises whose services are very financially prohibitive let alone the fact the binding is not up to the standard.

Purchase of books

Bulk order of books and other library materials are made by major libraries (university and national library services) directly from suppliers abroad rather than through bookshops. Ministries purchase books and other library materials through Crown Agents, a very bureaucratic process. There is thus no centralized purchase for all libraries. As a result there is very little discount offered as a result of small, independent orders of materials made by various institutions

Data Processing

This is one of the least developed activities. Generally speaking almost everything is manually operated and there are no bibliographical data banks as such.

Manufacture of equipment, furniture and library materials:

Here again there exist no well established enterprises comparable to library bureaux in Scandinavia. Libraries have to depend on 'outside' organizations for the supply of equipment furniture and library materials. Furniture and stationery are not only expensive but they are also not up to the specifications demanded by libraries.

In the final analysis, therefore, there is a lot to be learnt from Scandinavia by African countries. Not only do centralized services result in economies of scale but they are a major contributing factor to the high standard of library services offered by the Nordic countries. However, African countries realize that for regional services to operate effectively and successful political stability, goodwill and cooperation is essential among the countries concerned. After all, doesn't everything, including economics, depend on politics?

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